

Commerce Corridor Feasibility Study
Presentation by Wilbur Smith Associates
January 30, 2004

Chair Dan O'Neal opened the meeting at 8:10AM in the JLOB Briefing Room.

Present

Tom Jones	Scott Merriman	Sen. Dan Swecker	Mark Stewart	Teri Hickey
Arno Hart	Janice Baumgardt	Tom Till	Charlie Howard	
Rep. Doug Ericksen	Jay Alexander	Barbara Ivanov	Sherilyn Anderson	
Dan O'Neal (chair)	Bob Josephson	Bruce Agnew	Jackie White	

Commerce Corridor Project Manager, Arno Hart of Wilbur Smith briefed the steering committee on the study's issues, deliverables and timeline.

Action Plan

- Task 1: Evaluation Approach: What is feasibility? The goal for this task is to apply criteria and, ultimately, choose one idea of several.
- Task 2: Define Product Features. Who uses the corridor and how will it look? The focus here is on a truly MULTIMODAL corridor. Who's going to pay for it? To accomplish this, we'll be looking at other studies (e.g. Alameda Corridor and Cross Texas Corridors).
- Task 3: Financial "bankability."
- Task 4: Legal. Bringing the private sector to the public.
- Task 5: Environmental issues.
- Task 6: Community issues.
- Task 7: Draft report.
- Task 8: Final report.

Discussion Points

Scott said that land use laws (GMA) will be a critical question.

Arno agreed and said that environmental issues increase private sector risk and that no private sector money will flow until they're settled. He separated environmental and community impact issues.

Note that the Discovery Institute is also doing a side study for pipeline feasibility.

Senator Swecker said that this original vision included corridors that require some public funding -- they cannot pay for themselves; land owners are offered incentives to partner with corridor development by giving right of way.

The state's current work streamlining environmental permitting process -- via Design-Build -- will support corridor development.

Geographic scope on the west side of the Cascades. However, this study should be used to create a tool or template that may be applied in eastern Washington or elsewhere. The state could secure

right-of-way and build out with private investment segment by segment.

Dan asked if this study could be used as a template elsewhere.

Arno replied that the process may be replicated, but that it would be more difficult to transfer this work to site decisions.

Representative Ericksen

- asked if, at the end of the study, we will have a specific alignment. For \$500,000, how good of a picture will we get on “feasibility” by January 7? *Arno* replied that the study will define a general band through urban areas, environmentally sensitive areas, but not a line on a map. By January 7, we should know to what degree the private sector will be involved and which modes make sense.

- asked if the committee will have enough information to come to a decision at the end of the study. *Arno* replied that the committee will know whether private sector funding is possible, which modes have potential, and which do not.

- asked Washington State to consider non-wheeled transportation modes such as elevated or hiking/biking corridors.

Senator Swecker said that he’s interested in mode evolution and a long-run 50-year strategic vision.

Arno agreed and emphasized market-driven mode innovation.

Scott said that policy decision must sequence with land use laws on the books and environmental considerations.

Arno referenced managed lane structure – demand management tool – for policy evolution.

Dan said that the TIFA study offers an array of finance tools that we should examine.

Tom said that the ports may be interested in additional rail capacity.

Senator Swecker said that due to Washington’s special environmental challenges, we should investigate tunneling. Although costly, tunneling may be an approach to deal with sensitive areas.

Charlie said that we should remain open to a loop bypassing urban areas, linking back to I-5.

Representative Ericksen asked if other states have modeled telecommunication utility corridors.

Arno replied that there are few successful existent cases.

Representative Ericksen said that past discussion with the railroads did not indicate high interest in the N-S corridor. *Dan* pointed out that N-S commerce is growing, but that the rail company’s need to make bottom line will remain their number one motivation.

Bruce said that this could be the first true green corridor between Canada and the U.S.

Senator Swecker said that he would not support converting existing roads to toll roads. He would like public bonds considered in the financing mix.

Dan said that he wants to see constant communication with the freight community and that there are existing forums, such as the PSRC Freight Mobility Roundtable, to reach them.

Charlie noted that Task 1 is a critical task and asked if there was going to be a problem for the group to wait until April to meet again.

Arno replied that we'll host informal one-on-one meetings to share technical memo #1 – evaluation approach and definition of feasibility before the next steering committee meeting.

Teri noted that there will be a link on the WSDOT Freight website to the presentation given today. Also, as documents for the study are prepared and released, more links will be added.

Steering Committee Meeting Dates

April 30, 2004

July 30, 2004

October 1, 2004

January 7, 2005

Forum Meeting Dates

TBD the week of July 5-9, 2004

TBD the week of October 25-29, 2004

The meeting adjourned at 9:25AM.